

years, our two nations have enjoyed such a relationship. During World War II, Tunisia's nationalist leaders suspended their struggle against France in order to support the Allied cause: they knew which side in that war was fighting for the values they held dear. During the tense cold war years, Tunisia was one of America's most reliable allies in the Mediterranean, and Tunisia's friendship proved of tremendous benefit to the Sixth Fleet.

Since the end of the cold war, Tunisia has continued to be a friend and ally of the United States. Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has been very active in supporting the Middle East peace process. He has also sought to open his country's economy to greater U.S. investment, a goal that has gotten a recent boost from our own State Department, which has proposed a new trade partnership with the countries of North Africa, including Tunisia. Our military ties with Tunisia also remain strong. Just last month Defense Secretary William Cohen visited Tunisia and discussed a number of issues of mutual interest, including the Iraqi situation, the Middle East peace process and the Lockerbie bombing.

I think it is safe to say that few of our Nation's bilateral relationships have been broadly and consistently positive for so long. I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Tunisia on its National Day and in honoring this great friend of the United States.●

JAMES D. WOOD, P.E.

● Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. President, I am proud that one of my constituents, James D. Wood of Abingdon, Maryland, is a finalist for the National Society of Professional Engineers' Federal Engineer of the Year Award.

Mr. Wood is a Program Manager for the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. He has made significant and lasting contributions to resolve complex air quality issues and enhance environmental auditing efforts at DOD installations throughout the world over the past two decades. His extraordinary technical skills, dedication to the engineering profession, superlative leadership, and personal commitment to subordinates distinguish him as a premier air quality expert in the Department of the Army.

Mr. Wood was instrumental in directing responses to air quality crises affecting U.S. forces, including assessing and mitigating health risks to U.S. peacekeepers in Bosnia. He is one of the foremost authorities on environmental auditing in the Army.

A member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, he has served in key leadership roles and on the Board of Directors of the Maryland So-

ciety of Professional Engineers, and in every leadership position of its Susquehanna Chapter during the past 15 years. His selfless efforts to promote engineering awareness of high school students are superb.

Wood holds a B.S. in chemical engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla, a M.S. in environmental engineering from the Johns Hopkins University, and a M.S. in engineering management from the Florida Institute of Technology.●

#### YELLOWSTONE COUNTY AGENT JOHN RAMNEY'S 37 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mr. John Ramney, a fellow Montana, who has spent 37 years in public service as an Agriculture Extension Agent for Yellowstone County, Montana. Over this period he has helped farmers, downtown business folks and the media with agricultural-related questions, in a professional manner that is a role model for exemplary public service today.

Mr. Ramney's career served Montana's agriculture industry with a unique quiet dedication not usually seen today. He began his career as a county agent in training in Thompson Falls and Great Falls, Montana. He then became a 4-H Agent with the Yellowstone County Extension Office in 1961. After serving as an assistant county agent in training in Billings for six years, he became a full fledged County Agent for Yellowstone County.

His job has involved educating the agricultural producers in Yellowstone County, Montana to enhance their productivity. He has done this primarily by providing information from research done at Montana State University or other experiment stations. He has also conducted numerous meetings and workshops to strengthen the farmers' knowledge and capabilities as Yellowstone County moved from a rural to a more urban county. In addition, he tirelessly maintained personal contacts with local farmers to ensure their understanding about crops, livestock, farm machinery, and land leases were up to date.

Over his almost 40 years as a County Agent, Mr. Ramney always acted in a positive and helpful manner. He said that even though he has answered many, many questions over the years, he has learned that everyone who calls or stops by teaches him something. For example, he noted that a lot more calls were looking for information that people heard about from other universities and experimental stations in other parts of the country. With the advent of better communications, farmers knew more about what was happening in Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. As Mr. Ramney said, "They ask for it and I

hunt for information wherever it might be." Ms. Mary Zartman, Personnel Director of the Montana State University Extension Service stated, with the news of Mr. Ramney's retirement, "He'll be a hard act to follow." Please join with me in recognizing an unusual American and a great Montanan.●

#### TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL AGENT STEVEN J. PIROTTE

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, for the past two years, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' Office of Legislative Affairs has been under the able leadership of Steven J. Pirotte. Special Agent Pirotte has served as the Executive Assistant to the Director of ATF since the beginning of 1997, and in that capacity, has provided conscientious service to many Members of Congress and their staffs, my own included.

Steve is moving to a new challenge on April 18, when he reports to his new post of duty as the Division Director and Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Boston Field Division, with oversight over ATF's functions in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Northern New York and New Hampshire. His honest counsel, assistance, and expertise will be missed by all of us who have worked with him.

Special Agent Pirotte began his career with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in 1975 in Falls Church, Virginia, later serving posts of duty in Washington, D.C., Winchester, Virginia, and Denver, Colorado. From 1986 to 1989, he served as Group Supervisor for the Mid-Atlantic Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force and coordinated all OCDETF investigations in the two field divisions and 26 offices throughout the Mid-Atlantic states, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

He served three years on ATF's National Response Team, served as supervisor with the Metropolitan Area Task Force for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and just prior to his current assignment, served as Assistant Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Charlotte, North Carolina Field Division, overseeing bombing, church arson, firearms trafficking and cigarette diversion investigations.

Members of Congress have been well served with Steve at the helm of ATF's Legislative Affairs office, and we wish him well in his new position.●

#### SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 22, which is S. 364.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.